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ABSTRACT

This paper outlines aspects of the teaching-learning process and the underlying theoretical framework. Techniques of effective teaching are described and analyzed. Selected teacher behaviors and some of the underlying assumptions concerning the teacher-learner interaction are examined. For the purpose of clarity and brevity, the teaching process is divided into four major categories: organization, communication, motivation, and human relations skills. Each is discussed in the light of teaching techniques and the underlying assumptions concerning the teacher-learner interaction. (JD)

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SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TEACHING PROCESS

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INTRODUCTION

Researchers have attempted to identify the characteristics of effective teachers ever since educational psychology became a discipline. Early lists credited the effective teacher with attitudinal traits of fairness and concern. Such traits were not only difficult to define, but were not found to have an effect on students' learning. Currently, teaching research is focusing on the observation of teacher and student behaviors. Behavioral variables are not easily isolated within the classroom or lecture hall. It is impossible, therefore, to re-create the learning encounter in a laboratory simulation, and difficult to obtain data in the real world situation. New instruments for obtaining objective and quantifiable measurements of teacher-learner interactions are starting to be developed.

This paper will focus on selected teacher behaviors and some of the underlying assumptions concerning the teacher-learner interaction. The teaching process has been divided into Organization, Communication, Motivation, and Human Relations Skills, in an attempt to delineate teacher behaviors. No attempt has been made to establish priorities of importance. Teachers have individual interests, needs, and abilities, as do students. "Effective" teachers do not or should not exhibit stereotyped behavior. It is hoped that this report will stimulate discussion and introspection of the reader's own process of teaching.

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SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TEACHING PROCESS

Teaching Techniques	Underlying Assumptions Concerning the Teacher-Learner Interaction
I. ORGANIZATION SKILLS	
An Effective Teacher:	
A. Establishes a learning climate (rapport between the teacher and students) in order to capture students' interest in the instructional exercise.	The group atmosphere affects satisfaction as well as the products of learning.
B. Establishes appropriate frame of reference or point of view concerning the instruction.	
1. Relates to prior or subsequent instruction;	Certain generalizations, called learning sets, have extensive applicability to the solution of new problems, and may be taught.
2. Relates to established or familiar concepts:	Sudden insight into the solution of problems occurs when the learner has had extensive previous experience with related problems which he transfers to new situations.
a. compares or contrasts concepts; b. gives generalizations to prepare for the presentation of new material.	Learning may be shortened by providing cues about the definition of a concept. Learning principles is more important than learning facts, as principles may be applied to new situations.
3. Relates to the objectives of the course;	Information is better retained if it is consistent with the learner's own values and needs.
4. Relates the students' interests and needs.	
C. States the purpose of the instruction.	Meaningful material is more easily learned because it represents material that has already been partly learned.
1. Delineates expected student roles in the instruction;	
2. Delineates objectives of instruction;	
3. Delineates the topics of instruction.	The perceptual features of a problem ("what-leads-to what," organic interrelatedness) are important conditions of learning. Hence, a learning problem should be so structured and presented that essential features are open to the learner's inspection.
4. Identifies the elements that will serve as organizing threads.	

Teaching Techniques	Underlying Assumptions Concerning the Teacher-Learner Interaction
ORGANIZATION SKILLS Cont'd.	
D. Sequences material and concepts in logical and systematic order.	Forgetting is largely a result of the interference of other learning activities with what is to be retained.
1. Gives general concepts and then specific examples, or specific examples and then generalities. However, the student must be aware of which is the general concept and which are the specific examples;	The organization of knowledge should be an essential concern of the teacher.
2. Integrates learning materials (text, films) into the instruction.	
E. Selects, adapts, evaluates, and integrates strategies and materials in view of long-range goals.	Learning is related to learners' cultural experiences, motivations, and abilities. Provisions must be made for slower and more rapid learners, as well as for those with specialized abilities.
1. Has alternative materials and learning aids for students (references, slide/tape presentations);	Generalization and discrimination suggest the importance of practice in varied contexts.
2. Uses exercises (e.g. examinations) as teaching devices which provide feedback to the students and to the teacher for planning further instruction.	
F. Reveals a thorough, rich, and varied background in areas taught.	
G. Shows evidence of planning.	
H. Achieves closure: pulls together major concepts of the instruction so as to form a cohesive link between past knowledge and understanding and new knowledge and understanding.	Behavioral reinforcement results from the successful completion of a task or the discovery of a solution to a problem.

Teaching Techniques

Underlying Assumptions Concerning the Teacher-Learner Interaction

II. COMMUNICATION SKILLS

An Effective Teacher:

A. Teacher as source of information

1. Uses media to his advantage:

a. has clear and concise slides (large enough to read and with a limited amount of material);

b. writes legibly and in an organized manner on the chalkboard, duplicated materials, etc.;

c. writes syllabus material that is concise, relates to the topic of discussion, is well organized, is readable, and is complete and detailed;

Learning from printed material is improved by recalling information as part of the learning process.

d. has previewed materials for appropriateness.

2. Gives clear and concise instructions/explanations.

3. Uses models and analogies to simplify and clarify explanations.

4. Uses terminology which is appropriate to the level of the learner, or defines scientific or medical terms that the student may not know.

5. Uses nonverbal communication (makes eye contact, nods, smiles, etc.).

6. Uses adequate voice projection techniques: 1) is audible, 2) varies pitch and loudness for effect, 3) has unoffensive mannerisms, 4) is animated.

Teaching Techniques

Underlying Assumptions Concerning the Teacher-Learner Interaction

COMMUNICATION SKILLS Cont'd.

7. Adjusts speed of delivery.

a. shifts pace depending upon the kind of learning activity and student ability;

b. shows smooth transitions.

8. Models the kind of behavior that reflects: 1) interest in the subject matter, 2) enjoyment of teaching and learning, 3) receptivity to others' needs and interests.

The presence of models, opportunities to imitate the behavior of models, novelty in behavior, and the use of cueing stimulate behavior changes.

9. Varies questioning technique.

a. asks higher order (What is your opinion?, How is __ related to __?, How?, Why?) questions as well as recall (When? What?);

b. uses questions in order to achieve inductive or deductive reasoning;

c. gets the students to volunteer answers or summarize:

The learners should be <u>active</u> rather than <u>passive</u> listeners or viewers.

1) pauses so that students know that an answer is expected and can formulate a more complete answer;

2) builds questions out of a student's response;

3) takes the lead or continues the lecture built around a student's response;

Experience without active participation or reinforcement produces inefficient learning compared with that which occurs when performance is directly reinforced.

4) refocuses the discussion as necessary.

10

d. writes questions for examinations that are clear, concise, and "relevant" to course objectives

11

Teaching Techniques	Underlying Assumptions Concerning the Teacher-Learner Interaction
COMMUNICATION SKILLS Cont'd.	
10. Provides feedback to the students on their performances/accept student responses:	Feedback confirms correct knowledge and corrects faulty learning.
a. reinforces good behavior/answers;	
b. asks students to expand on an answer;	
c. leads students to develop a better answer if the answer is wrong. Prompts by rephrasing a question or seeking further clarification;	
d. probes to find an answer by encouraging students to try again.	The magnitude of reinforcement is likely to be of much less significance than the fact that a reinforcement will or will not occur.
B. Teacher as receiver of information:	
1. Seeks suggestions and makes changes when necessary (as opposed to rationalizations for certain behaviors).	
2. Is aware of students' questions:	Experiences ending in failure are likely to result in inefficient learning.
a. is free to answer them, to say that he/she does not know the answer, or to say that it will be answered later;	
b. handles questions economically yet adequately;	
3. Is aware of individual interests, needs, and abilities:	Ability to learn is a product of the individual's inheritance and his exposure to previous learning situations.
a. identifies and encourages individual needs and interests;	Divergent thinking, which leads to inventive solutions of problems or to the creation of novel and valued products, is to be nurtured along with convergent thinking, which leads to logically
b. helps students channel their interests;	

Teaching Techniques	Underlying Assumptions Concerning the Teacher-Learner Interaction
COMMUNICATION SKILLS Cont'd.	
c. provides alternative learning materials;	correct answers. Such divergent thinking requires the subject to perceive himself as potentially creative through appropriate support (feedback) of tentative efforts at originality.
d. perceives and interprets visual cues given by the class.	
III. MOTIVATION	
An Effective Teacher:	
A. Provides a mechanism for student input in planning and evaluation.	Rate of learning is related to the individual's arousal level. Goal setting by the learner is as important as motivation for learning; his successes and failures are determinants of how he sets further goals. Student participation in goal setting encourages the continuation of activity when the teacher is absent.
B. Points out subject matter relevance to the student.	Learning with understanding (meaningful to the student or his situation) is more permanent and transferable than rote learning.
C. Uses a variety of techniques to stimulate interest or discussion (case studies, lectures, tutorials, videotapes, role playing).	Any novel or unusual event may function as a reinforcer.
D. Presents discrepant events or situations as a stimulus for further inquiry.	A learner tries to restore logic when faced with incongruities.

Teaching Techniques	Underlying Assumptions Concerning the Teacher-Learner Interaction
IV. HUMAN RELATIONS SKILLS	
An Effective Teacher:	
A. Exhibits a spirit of cooperation and a working rapport:	Overrigidity in the management of learning may result in inefficient learning due to negative emotional responses.
1. With students:	
a. volunteers time;	
b. genuinely praises student effort;	Reinforcement is important. Desirable or correct responses should be rewarded and approval voiced.
c. displays tact and sensitivity when dealing with student deficiencies or problems (academic and behavioral);	Conflicts and frustrations inevitably arise in the process of learning difficult discriminations. These should be recognized and provisions made for their resolution or accommodation.
d. recognizes and responds appropriately to the moods of the class.	
2. With faculty:	
a. participates in faculty discussions;	The interaction of group members may provide sources of reinforcement which would otherwise not exist.
b. commands and gives respect;	
c. gives credit where credit is due.	
B. Displays a sense of humor in the classroom in order to liven presentations and relieve tension.	Positive and negative attitudes may influence the level of motivation.
C. Meets class commitments by being prepared and prompt.	

Teaching Techniques	Underlying Assumptions Concerning the Teacher-Learner Interaction
HUMAN RELATIONS SKILLS Cont'd.	
D. Is adaptable and flexible:	
1. Arranges additional classes when necessary;	Repetition is essential for acquisition of a skill and in learning retention.
2. Provides additional learning materials;	
3. Makes revisions in plans as required.	
E. Acknowledges own errors.	

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